

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,
As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Please take as an example the coverage of the Presidential Debate on September 30. All of the local news stations carried the debate, yet most of the local news stations failed to report on the issues of the presidential debate, other than the Iraq war/rebuilding and the 9/11 attacks. I would love to hear more about the two major candidates plans for the environment and how we are going to fix the environmental mess that the Bush Administration has allowed to happen in order to cater to the "energy" industry.

Sincerely,

Julia Simons
6545 Buchan Road
Pembroke, GA 313218641